

2007 Woodie Flowers Award Nomination for Mr. H

Mr. Hildebrandt ('H' as he is more affectionately called) has been a part of *FIRST* since 1999, starting at Rochester High School with team 201 the F.E.D.S. and then transferring to Rochester Adams High School in 2002 where he currently holds the position of CAD Instructor. He is the most amazing mentor any team could ever have.

Our team participates in two completely different competitions during the school year. For many mentors, 2 robotics seasons in one year is too much of a time commitment. One of these competitions is called Oakland County Competitive Robotics Association (OCCRA) which starts when school begins and ends before *FIRST* starts. The robots for this season are completely student built, but the mentors are allowed to give input on our designs as well as instruction on the proper use of tools and show us previous concepts that worked and don't work. This year we built the robot for OCCRA 2 times. The first time we designed the robot, H restrained himself from telling us we were completely wrong in our design and that we should build an arm robot. At the first competition, we scored 0 points and the robot that won looked exactly like the robot he showed us. H stood through 6 weeks of watching us making a mistake to let us learn for ourselves and when we learned what he already knew, he put in the 18 hour work days to let us stay and fix it in the week between competitions.

As a student, you see *FIRST* in a four-year flash. When you first join the team, it is extremely difficult to find your place in the build season. H realizes the struggles of the new members in the build season and finds them something they can do and learn from. A new student on the team was asked for a 7/16 socket wrench by a mentor. Realizing the student had no idea what a socket wrench was, he gave him an in depth explanation of the tool and everything it is commonly used for. H is a mentor that goes the extra mile to keep the motion of the team flowing from year to year and day to day.

Despite his incredible influence on the team, he encourages other adults to play an active role. Even though he is the team coach he wants others to share their opinions and he listens to their suggestions. After the idea pile is sorted, he delegates the tasks to groups on the team. The Students watch how the adults behave, and see that collaboration is better than competition when we are all trying to accomplish the same objectives.

Even after *FIRST*, after OCCRA, after school, he still contributes and encourages team building exercises over the summer like our participation in Relay for Life, the Crop Walk, our annual can drive, as well as spreading the word of robotics throughout our community through various other voluntary services. One of the best examples of spreading the word of robotics is the partnership that 'H' started with another high school in our district who has easily found a welcoming place in our team.

His role as a mentor on our team is to inspire and lead us. He is the reason we won our OCCRA competition. He is the person who gave and still gives our team a sturdy foundation to grow on. We see how much H truly gives to this program each and every day, asking absolutely nothing in return but the effort of a student to learn.